Overview

The School as a Community of Care is a key component of WGU's Professional Core and is a required course for all initial licensure candidates. This course prepares candidates to meet the social and emotional learning needs of learners and to effectively collaborate with parents, families, caregivers, and other community stakeholders in each child's education, building a strong foundation for academic and personal success. Emphasis is placed on family engagement as candidates gain knowledge of individual, cultural, and community assets that can be used to facilitate learner growth and development, as well as understand mental health and emotional differences among learners that may necessitate leveraging additional resources to support students' wellbeing. Issues of youth mental health, substance abuse, suicide awareness and prevention, and abuse within families will be addressed as will the importance of parent involvement. Candidates will engage in four hours of preclinical experiences, which include visual observations of learning environments that involve parents and families in their children's education while supporting the social and emotional learning (SEL) needs of learners and an interview with an educational professional to explore topics related to parent involvement, youth mental health issues, and professional responsibilities to ensure student wellbeing. Additionally, crosscutting themes of technology and diversity are interwoven for further development. This course is designed to be taken after successful completion of the Educational Psychology and Development of Children and Adolescents course.

Competencies

- **Readiness**
  
  This competency exists to assess the readiness of students.

- **Recognizing the Community of Care**
  
  The graduate plans for learning environments that meet all students' cultural, social, and emotional learning needs by incorporating knowledge of individual learners, diverse cultures, and communities.

- **Ensuring Your Classroom is a Safe and Supportive Place for All Students**
  
  The graduate develops strategies to address the social and emotional learning (SEL) needs of students, including the incorporation of trauma-informed or restorative instructional practices.

- **Supporting the Mental and Emotional Well-Being of Your Students**
  
  The graduate identifies appropriate resources and processes to support the mental health and emotional well-being of students.

- **Collaborating to Support the Community of Care**
  
  The graduate collaborates with families, caretakers, and the larger community to identify partnerships that facilitate learner growth.
Welcome to The School as a Community of Care! As a caring educator, you will play an important role in supporting the social and emotional well-being of your students. This course will help you learn how to effectively collaborate with families, caregivers, and other community stakeholders and build a strong foundation that will promote the academic and personal success of your future students. Readings and resources in the course will explore issues of youth mental health, identity development, substance abuse, suicide awareness and prevention, trauma-informed education, and restorative educational practices. This course includes carefully selected readings, videos, and assessment activities that challenge you to apply what you have learned. Competency will be demonstrated by completing a performance assessment consisting of several tasks applying what you learned to classroom situations and identifying appropriate teaching strategies and resources to support the social and emotional needs of students.